

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES  
NEWS RELEASE**



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**2013 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release #69  
Summer Update #6, Districts 1-6  
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

**Assessment Projects**

Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF)/ ADF&G, YDFDA

8.5-Inch Set Gillnet: The LYTF concluded operations on July 14. The cumulative CPUE for the 2013 season is 7.39, which is well below the historical average of 22.22 for late run years.

8.25-Inch Drift Gillnet: The Big Eddy Chinook salmon drift test fishery concluded operations on July 15. The cumulative CPUE for the 2013 season is 197.61, which is well below the historical average of 438.81.

Summer Chum Drift Test Fishery/ ADF&G, YDFDA

5.5-Inch Drift Gillnet: The summer chum drift test fishery concluded operations on July 15. The cumulative CPUE for the 2013 season is 4,471.28, which is above the historical median of 3,745.03.

Andreafsky River Weir/ USFWS

As of July 14, approximately 1,500 Chinook salmon have been recorded, which is below the historical average of 2,600 for this date. The cumulative count of summer chum salmon through July 14 is 52,000, which is above the historical median of 36,000 for this date.

Pilot Station Sonar Project/ ADF&G

Chinook salmon passage at Pilot Station sonar is estimated at 113,600 salmon as of July 14, which is below the historical average of 124,000 salmon for late run years at the same date. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated at 2.6 million salmon, which is well above the historical median of 1.8 million salmon for this date.

Anvik River Sonar Project/ ADF&G

The summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be approximately 503,000 through July 14, which is above the historical median of 352,000 for this date.

Gisasa River Weir/ USFWS

As of July 14, approximately 400 Chinook salmon have been recorded, which is below the historical average of 1,200 for this date. The cumulative count of summer chum salmon through July 14 is 59,000, which is above the historical median of 25,000 for this date.

Henshaw Creek Weir/ TCC

As of July 14, approximately 90 Chinook and 21,400 summer chum salmon have been recorded.

Rapids Video Test Fish Wheel/ Zuray

Approximately 1,800 Chinook salmon have been recorded as of July 14, which is well above the historical average of 1,100 for this date. Approximately 770 summer chum salmon have been recorded, which is above the historical median of 350 for this date.

Chena River Tower/ ADF&G

The Chena River Tower began counting on July 9. As of July 14, no Chinook or summer chum salmon have been counted. Project operations were impacted by high water and poor visibility from July 11-14.

Salcha River Tower/ BSFA

The Salcha River Tower began counting on July 9. As of July 9, approximately 90 Chinook and 9 summer chum salmon have been counted. Project operations were impacted by high water and poor visibility from July 11-13.

Eagle Sonar/ ADF&G

The Eagle Sonar began generating estimates on July 6. As of July 14, approximately 200 Chinook salmon have been counted which is below the historic cumulative average of 3,700 salmon for this date.

*NOTE: Other assessment projects will be added as they become operational.*

Age Composition

The Chinook salmon age composition from the 8.5-inch LYTF set nets through the season (Big Eddy) and July 4 (Middle Mouth) was 2% age-4, 22% age-5, 74% age-6, and 2% age-7 fish. Age-5 fish were below average and age-6 fish were above average. Females were above average at 61%. The sample size was 512 fish.

The Chinook salmon age composition from the 8.25-inch Big Eddy drift nets was 2% age-4, 27% age-5, 69% age-6, and 3% age-7 fish. Females were 59%. The sample size was 123 fish.

The Chinook salmon age composition from subsistence harvests in Districts 1 and 2 was 32% age-4, 39% age-5, and 29% age-6 fish. Females were 23%. The sample size was 111 fish. The Association of Village Council Presidents operates the subsistence Chinook salmon sampling project in the lower Yukon River.

The summer chum salmon age composition from the 5.5-inch LYTF drift nets through the season (Big Eddy) and July 4 (Middle Mouth) was 45% age-4, 54% age-5, and 1% age-6 fish. Age-4 fish were near average and age-5 fish were slightly above average. Females were 50%. The sample size was 1,110 fish.

The summer chum salmon age composition from the beach seine and dipnet commercial fishery through July 1 was 38% age-4, 59% age-5, and 2% age-6 fish. Females were 47%. The sample size was 960 fish collected from six periods in District 1.

The summer chum salmon age composition from the gillnet commercial fishery after July 1 was 51% age-4, 47% age-5, and 2% age-6 fish. Females were 47%. The sample size was 640 fish collected from four periods in District 1.

## **Assessment**

The Chinook salmon run is later than average years. The sonar located near Pilot Station had a cumulative passage estimate of approximately 113,600 Chinook salmon through July 14 which is below the historical average of 142,000 for this date, and is also below the average passage estimate of 124,000 at this point for late run years. The first quarter point for the Chinook salmon run at the sonar was likely between June 21 and June 23, the median was likely between June 26 and June 27, and the third quarter point was approximately July 2. These dates are preliminary until the Chinook salmon run is completed. The second pulse of Chinook salmon has likely migrated through the Rapids Test Fish Wheel, based on run migration timing and the sustained daily counts observed at the project. The first Chinook salmon was recorded at Eagle sonar near the Canadian border on July 6 and approximately 200 fish have been counted as of July 14. This is well below the historical cumulative average of 3,700 for this date. The first pulse of Chinook salmon is expected to reach Eagle sonar later this week. Based on the best available data and historical timing associated with an average late run, the 2013 Chinook salmon total run size is projected to end near the middle of the preseason outlook range of 98,000 to 142,000.

Currently, all escapement monitoring projects for Chinook salmon (Andreafsky River weir, Gisasa River weir, Henshaw Creek weir, Chena River tower, and Salcha River tower) have estimated passages well below the historical averages for this date. Due to the late run timing, Chinook salmon escapement counts are not expected to increase dramatically until later in the week. However, due to the overall low run size, escapements are expected to be lower than historical averages in some or most monitored streams.

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the first pulse of Chinook salmon at the sonar located near Pilot Station (June 16-23) indicate that 72% were Canadian-origin Chinook salmon. Genetic MSA on the second pulse of Chinook salmon at the sonar (June 24 – July 2) indicate that 50% were Canadian-origin Chinook salmon. Due to a small sample size, samples from June 29

through July 10 were pooled together for genetic MSA on the final groups of Chinook salmon moving past the sonar. Analyses indicate that of these samples, 27% were Canadian-origin Chinook salmon. These genetic analyses suggest a better Canadian run size than 2012. For more background information on genetic MSA for Yukon River Chinook salmon and related topics and updates, please refer to the department's Gene Conservation Laboratory webpage ([http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishinggeneconservationlab.yukonchinook\\_baselin\\_e](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishinggeneconservationlab.yukonchinook_baselin_e)).

Summer chum salmon passage through July 14 at the sonar located near Pilot Station is estimated at approximately 2.6 million fish, which is well above the historical median of 1.8 million for this date. Daily passage of summer chum salmon at the sonar has been declining since July 1.

### **Management Strategies**

The first pulse of Chinook salmon is expected to reach the Canadian border around July 19. During the course of the next several weeks management actions will be focused on the upriver districts to ensure adequate escapement is achieved. At this time, there is some uncertainty associated with the strength of the second pulse of Chinook salmon which is expected to pass the Eagle sonar site beginning July 20. However, based on assessment information to date, the poor run sizes observed in recent years, and the difficulties in meeting escapement goals, it is warranted to continue to conservatively manage the Chinook salmon run in the Upper Yukon districts. The extended subsistence salmon fishing closures in District 5 are being followed with reduced subsistence fishing periods to provide additional conservation for the Chinook salmon run. However, during these reduced subsistence periods, gillnets will continue to be restricted to no larger than 6 inches and fish wheel operators are required to release all Chinook salmon alive. If the second pulse is assessed by Eagle sonar to be better than anticipated, and confidence is gained that the escapement objective in Canada will be met, subsistence restrictions may be relaxed.

In District 6, one subsistence period was canceled last week in order to protect the first pulse of Chinook salmon entering the Tanana River. Escapement monitoring projects on the Chena and Salcha Rivers will be monitored to assess whether any additional subsistence fishing restrictions are warranted in District 6 to protect Tanana River stocks.

The 2013 Chinook and summer chum salmon runs are nearly over in the lower river. Subsistence fishing restrictions and schedules have been relaxed in District 1 through Subdistrict 4-A in preparation for the fall season.

The final commercial fishing periods for the summer season have been scheduled in District 1 and District 2 and these districts will transition to fall season management by midweek. It is likely commercial fishing opportunity with fish wheels will continue to be provided in District 4-A through the end of July. The summer chum commercial fishing season is anticipated to begin in the Tanana River by the end of the week.

## **Current Management**

### **Subsistence Fishing:**

For the current subsistence schedule please call (toll free): **1-866-479-7387** or in Fairbanks call (907) **459-7387**. The current subsistence fishing schedules are as follows:

#### **Coastal District:**

Subsistence salmon fishing in the entire Coastal District is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

**District 1:** Subsistence salmon fishing in District 1 is currently closed. Effective 12:00 midnight Monday, July 15, subsistence salmon fishing will reopen immediately following the announced commercial period.

Thereafter, subsistence salmon fishing will be open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial salmon fishing period and fishermen may use gillnets with mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

**District 2:** Subsistence salmon fishing in District 2 is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial salmon fishing period and fishermen may use gillnets with mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

In District 2 subsistence salmon fishing will close at 3:00 a.m. Wednesday, July 17, and reopen at 12:00 noon Thursday, July 18.

**District 3:** Subsistence salmon fishing in District 3 is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day and fishermen may use gillnets with mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

**Subdistrict 4-A** (from  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Cone Point, which includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Anvik and Grayling Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk):

Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistrict 4-A is currently closed. Effective, 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 17, Subdistrict 4-A will return to the regular subsistence salmon fishing schedule which consists of two 48-hour periods each week, from 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 6:00 p.m. Fridays and from 6:00 p.m. Sundays until 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less and Chinook salmon may be kept when caught in fish wheels.

Fishermen are reminded that effective 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 15, the use of drift gillnets is prohibited in Subdistrict 4-A.

**Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C** (from Cone Point to Illinois Creek, which includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Galena and Ruby):

Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C is currently closed. The 48-hour subsistence salmon fishing period scheduled to begin 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 17, will be reduced to a 24-hour subsistence salmon fishing period.

Subsistence salmon fishing will be open from 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 17, until 6:00 p.m. Thursday, July 18. Gillnets are restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size and fish wheels must be equipped with a chute or a live box. Fish wheels must be closely attended while in operation and all Chinook salmon caught in fish wheels must be returned to the water alive.

Effective, 6:00 p.m. Sunday, July 21, Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C will return to the regular subsistence salmon fishing schedule which consists of two 48-hour periods each week, from 6:00 p.m. Sundays until 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays, and from 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 6:00 p.m. Fridays. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less and Chinook salmon may be kept when caught in fish wheels.

**Subdistricts 5-A,B,C:** Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C is currently closed. The 48-hour subsistence salmon fishing period scheduled to begin 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 16, will be reduced to a 24-hour subsistence salmon fishing period.

Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C will be open from 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 16, until 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 17. Gillnets are restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size and fish wheels must be equipped with a chute or a live box. Fish wheels must be closely attended while in operation and all Chinook salmon caught in fish wheels must be returned to the water alive.

The department will notify fishermen by July 18 concerning the subsistence salmon fishing schedule in Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C.

**Subdistricts 5-D:** Because of the large size of Subdistrict 5-D and the long time it takes salmon to migrate all the way through this section of river, this management area will be further subdivided. This strategy is intended to allow for more management precision and flexibility when the reduced subsistence fishing schedule is implemented to conserve Chinook salmon. Subdistrict 5-D, will be divided into the following three areas

**Subdistricts 5-D Lower** (from an ADF&G regulatory marker 2 miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the Hadweenzic River and including all adjacent tributaries, which includes the communities of Stevens Village and Beaver):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Subsistence salmon fishing will be open for one 24-hour subsistence salmon fishing period from 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 17, until 8:00 p.m. Thursday, July 18. Gillnets are restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size and fish wheels must be equipped with a chute or a live box. Fish wheels must be closely attended while in operation and all Chinook salmon caught in fish wheels must be returned to the water alive.

**Subdistrict 5-D Middle** (from the Hadweenzic River upstream to 22 Mile Slough and including the Porcupine River and all other adjacent tributaries, which includes the communities of Venetie, Fort Yukon, and Chalkyitsik):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed to protect the first pulse of Chinook salmon and will remain closed until further notice.

**Subdistrict 5-D Upper** (from 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border and including all adjacent tributaries, which includes the communities of Circle and Eagle):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and gillnets are restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size. Effective 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 16, subsistence salmon fishing will close to protect the first pulse of Chinook salmon and will remain closed until further notice.

**Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B** (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the downstream mouth of Wood River, which includes the communities of Manley, Minto, and Nenana):

Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B is currently open. Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B consists of two 42-hour periods each week, from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays, and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

**Subdistricts 6-C** (from the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Salcha River, which includes the communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha):

Personal use salmon fishing in Subdistrict 6-C is closed and will remain closed until further notice to conserve Chinook salmon.

#### **Old Minto Area:**

Effective 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 15, subsistence fishing will reopen for the remainder of the scheduled period from 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 15, until 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 17.

Subsistence salmon fishing in Old Minto area is on a schedule of 5 days a week, from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays, and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

**Innoko River:** Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day and fishermen may use gillnets with mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

**Koyukuk River:** Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size to conserve Chinook salmon.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water.

### **Commercial Fishing:**

The preliminary commercial harvest in Districts 1 and 2 combined through July 14 is approximately 349,000 summer chum salmon with a reported 957 Chinook salmon released and 300 Chinook salmon caught but not sold.

**District 1 Commercial Gillnet Salmon Fishing:** Commercial salmon fishing in District 1 is open for one 9-hour period from 3:00 p.m. Monday, July 15, until 12:00 midnight Monday, July 15, with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size to target summer chum salmon.

**District 2 Commercial Gillnet Salmon Fishing:** Commercial salmon fishing in District 2 will be open for one 9-hour period from 3:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 17, until 12:00 midnight Wednesday, July 17, with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size to target summer chum salmon.

Commercial gillnet fishermen in District 1 and District 2 can release live Chinook salmon or retain them for subsistence purposes. The sale of Chinook salmon is prohibited and Chinook salmon caught but not sold must be reported on fish tickets.

**Subdistrict 4-A Commercial Fishwheel:** Fish wheels must be manned at all times during operations and all Chinook salmon caught in the fish wheels must immediately be released to the water alive. Commercial fishing will be open for six 24-hour fishing periods:

Period #15: Monday, July 15  
Period #16: Tuesday, July 16  
Period #17: Wednesday, July 17  
Period #18: Thursday, July 18  
Period #19: Friday, July 19  
Period #20: Saturday, July 20

The preliminary commercial harvest in Subdistrict 4-A through July 13 is approximately 58,300 summer chum salmon with a reported 36 Chinook salmon released alive.

The subsistence fishing schedule and recorded fishery announcements will be available 24 hours a day at 1-866-479-7387 (toll free outside of Fairbanks); in Fairbanks, call (907) 459-7387. If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the ADFG office in Emmonak at 949-1320 or in Fairbanks at 459-7274. The Emmonak ADF&G office will stand by on VHF channel 7A.